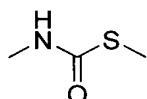


IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-17 (Cancelled).

Claim 18 (Previously Presented): A thiocarbamide comprising at least one carbodiimide group and at least one thiocarbamic ester group of the formula



Claim 19 (Previously Presented): The thiocarbamide according to claim 18, further comprising hydrophilic groups.

Claim 20 (Previously Presented): The thiocarbamide according to claim 18, wherein the hydrophilic groups are selected from ionic groups or nonionic hydrophilic groups.

Claim 21 (Currently Amended): The thiocarbamide according to claim 18, wherein the hydrophilic groups comprise the nonionic groups, and wherein the nonionic groups are polyalkylene oxide groups.

Claim 22 (Currently Amended): The thiocarbamide according to claim 18, wherein the thiocarbamide is obtainable by a process comprising [[by]] reacting a) carbodiimides having at least one isocyanate group, b) mercapto compounds having at least one mercapto group, and c) optionally, additional compounds having isocyanate groups or isocyanate-reactive groups.

Claim 23 (Currently Amended): The thiocarbamide according to claim 22, wherein the carbodiimides a) ~~derive are synthesized~~ from aliphatic or araliphatic C4 to C20 polyisocyanates.

Claim 24 (Previously Presented): The thiocarbamide according to claim 22, wherein the mercapto compounds b) comprise not only at least one mercapto group but also at least one hydrophilic group.

Claim 25 (Previously Presented): The thiocarbamide according to claim 18, comprising on average from 1 to 20 carbodiimide groups and from 1 to 4 thiocarbamic ester groups.

Claim 26 (Previously Presented): The thiocarbamide according to claim 18, comprising on average from 0.01 to 2 mol of hydrophilic groups per 1 kg of thiocarbamide.

Claim 27 (Currently Amended): A method of crosslinking polymers, comprising crosslinking the polymers with the using a thiocarbamide of according to claim 18 as crosslinker for polymers in solution or dispersion in water.

Claim 28 (Currently Amended): A method of stabilizing polymers containing ester or amide groups, the method comprising stabilizing the polymers with the thiocarbamide of using a thiocarbamide according to claim 18 as a stabilizer for polymers containing ester or amide groups.

Claim 29 (Previously Presented): An aqueous polymer dispersion or polymer solution comprising from 0.1 to 50 parts by weight of a thiocarbamide according to claim 18 per 100 parts by weight of polymer.

Claim 30 (Currently Amended): The aqueous polymer dispersion or polymer solution according to claim 29, wherein the dispersed or dissolved polymer is a polyurethane or a polymer ~~obtainable~~ obtained by free-radical addition polymerization of ethylenically unsaturated compounds.

Claim 31 (Previously Presented): The aqueous polymer dispersion or polymer solution according to claim 29, wherein the dissolved or dispersed polymer contains carboxylic acid groups.

Claim 32 (Previously Presented): The aqueous polymer dispersion or polymer solution according to claim 30, wherein the dissolved or dispersed polymer contains carboxylic acid groups.

Claim 33 (Currently Amended): A method of adhering two substrates comprising applying the polymer dispersion or solution of claim 29 to at least one surface of a first substrate to form a coated substrate and, contacting the coated surface of the coated substrate with a second substrate to adhere the substrates using the polymer dispersion or solution according to claim 29 as an adhesive, impregnant or coating material.

Claim 34 (Currently Amended): A method of adhering substrates, comprising
providing the polymer dispersion or polymer solution of claim 29 as or in a heat-
activatable adhesive,
providing the substrates with a dried film of said adhesive, and
heating the substrates immediately before, during or after joining
~~using the polymer dispersion or solution according to claim 29 as or in heat-activatable~~
~~adhesives.~~

Claim 35 (Previously Presented): A substrate coated, impregnated or adhesively bonded with the polymer dispersion or solution according to claim 29.

Claim 36 (Previously Presented): A substrate coated, impregnated or adhesively bonded with the polymer dispersion or solution according to claim 30.

Claim 37 (Previously Presented): A substrate coated, impregnated or adhesively bonded with the polymer dispersion or solution according to claim 31.

Claim 38 (New): A method of coating a substrate comprising applying the polymer dispersion or solution of claim 29 to at least one surface of substrate to coat the substrate.

Claim 39 (New): A method of impregnating a substrate comprising impregnating the substrate with the polymer dispersion or solution of claim 29.